

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

MOVEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS RENEWAL

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Passion ~ Easter ~ Ascension

1996



The Transfiguration by Raphael

ON TO LIMA, 1999!

The St. John's Festival continues to vibrate in the Buenos Aires congregation. Between us fourteen travellers, who have experienced so much in the United States, a strong tie has been forged, and a new color has been added to our 'community rainbow'. The general feeling which in many variations already has been expressed for instance at the last plenary session has not weakened, on the contrary: one feels that we truly have experienced community, and that the differences in culture, language and so on really only have helped us to feel stronger all which unites us on a higher level. I think that we thus have begun to grow inwardly and that this, too, will help us to grow as a community; something which so many long for but which, as we know, is so difficult to accomplish.

People still talk not only about the conference itself but again and again the theme of personal meetings comes up, as does the most generous reception of the Argentineans who visited Canada, Boston, Washington and New York. (Here I can speak only about what those from Buenos Aires experienced, as in the meantime I have had no contact with participants from the other Spanish speaking communities. But I am sure they will have experienced the same!)

And already now with anticipation we look forward to 'Lima 1999'. All those who came to Kimberthon also want to go to Lima, and certainly many more. And one really hopes in Lima to meet again 'old acquaintances' ... I will not mention names but it is remarkable to register how many of the North American participants have imprinted themselves in the minds (and hearts) of our Argentineans. This too shows how fundamental meeting each other has been, I'd say.

Whether indeed all who came to Kimberthon again will be able to travel will not only depend on whether people 'feel like it'. Without wanting to break into songs of lamentation, it has to be told that officially unemployment has risen above 18%, and unofficially will be much higher. Apart from unemployment, salary cuts have been implemented which are understandable but still hit home hard. As one

hardly finds other employment, one has to accept these cuts in order not to be out of work. And all this distinctly does not pass by our congregation!

In the meantime the proposed theme, 'Slavery' both in the historical sense and in a contemporary more psychological sense, seems to be dead on target. - I'd like to offer not only to translate coming contributions in the North American Newsletter on this theme into Spanish, but also to publish these in our small journal 'Imagen' which appears irregularly. This could be the beginning of a hopeful already shared North-South preparation for 'Lima 1999'!

Many greetings and good wishes from Buenos Aires.
Martin de Gans
Buenos Aires

RENEWING CHRISTIANITY Book Review

Recently a new series of books has appeared that provides an entry into some of the primary anthroposophical ideas that have become active in the world. The series, Rudolf Steiner's Ideas in Practice, describes various areas of anthroposophical work that have their roots in Steiner's ideas. Each of these initiatives was a response to a question about how anthroposophy could be applied in a practical way in a particular area of modern cultural and spiritual life. These books, which also include an illustrated biography of Rudolf Steiner, have addressed his ideas of farming, educating for special needs, architecture, and now *Renewing Christianity*.

Renewing Christianity is, in some ways, the most interesting and comprehensive, because laying out Rudolf Steiner's ideas of Christianity required an overview of the whole of Anthroposophy, since Christ is central to Steiner's path of knowledge. This task was no small feat, since this book is only about 125 pages, illustrated, and the size of a small paperback. Nevertheless, while this is an accessible introduction, it is not a superficial thumbnail sketch but a sort of structural overview that needs to be filled in by many years of thorough study, thought, and meditation. The bones are here, and they give a pretty good idea of

what anthroposophy has to offer as a spiritual path of initiation.

The author, James H. Hindes, is a Christian Community priest who currently ministers to a congregation in the area of Great Barrington, Massachusetts. In his book he offers us a historical and philosophical tour of the basic tenets of anthroposophy, its Goethean foundation, its basis in knowledge arrived at by supersensible means, and its basis in Christ and the Mystery of Golgotha as the turning point in human history.

Epistemologies are notoriously “dangerous.” Whenever a great prophet or initiate brings to humankind a revelation of our relationship to spiritual realities, those who follow often try to understand and demystify such revelations through systematic, critical logic, and frameworks suitable to ordinary human consciousness. Others, such as mystics, attempt to approach these mysteries directly, and thus, to a certain extent, bypass the intellect. We seldom escape one or the other of these extremes

Rudolf Steiner bridged these extremes by applying scientific method to spiritual inquiry and, out of his research, developed what became, and is still becoming, anthroposophy. He gave us an astounding variety of pictures and imaginations that were not meant to be taken as “information about” spiritual truth, but more like indications — “fingers pointing at the moon,” as Zen teachers like to say, and to which they quickly add, “Don’t mistake the finger pointing at the moon for the moon itself.” Rudolf Steiner’s method was itself an epistemology, using the framework provided by Western esoteric traditions, not as an end in itself, but as a means for our more scientifically-oriented minds of the twentieth century to investigate for ourselves. Pictured within this epistemology is the whole “structure” of reality, the ultimate historical time frame into which human reality fits and operates — our place within space, time, cause, and idea through our human fourfold structure of physical, etheric, astral, and I being.

James Hindes describes how anthroposophy contributes to a renewed Christianity. He points out that The Christian Community was not intended to be considered the “religious wing of anthroposophy,” but

rather, that religion is “the cultivation of certain feelings. Faith is not the holding of certain ideas to be true but an experience in the human heart, an experience of one’s connection with God. And because of the significance of thinking for our age, ideas can aid or hinder religion. [However] ... philosophizing about religion is not religion.”

This small book has much to recommend it for anyone who wants an introduction to (or a review of) a renewed Christianity and the basis of The Christian Community, as well as the ideas and work of Rudolf Steiner.

Jens Jensen

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO

After five years located on the first floor of a sixteen unit apartment building on Pratt Blvd, playing landlord to multi-racial (largely Pakistani) families, we have moved around the corner to other property owned by The Christian Community. This time it's a single-family house at 6711 N. Bosworth Ave, situated between our large empty lot to the north and a house to the south which is being rented for our priest, Oliver Steinreich, and his family. Oliver and members took up the challenge of constructing a sturdy wooden fence, creating a sort of skin surrounding the three properties. And inside, an amazing transformation took place as well. Doors were constructed to enclose the sanctuary, and lazure artist, John Stoffe, supervised the lazure painting of the chapel walls and ceiling. The color is beautiful violet-lavender, with hues deepening from pinkish to bluish from back to front, from entrance to altar.

Excited and exhilarated by the remarkable change; priest, leader and community members decided to keep the momentum going - so the community room adjoining the chapel was lazured in complementary transparent colors as well.

The quarters are small but intimate. Much work still needs to be done. Confirmand students are discussing a project to lazure one of the upstairs meeting rooms. There are many more possibilities for

improvement. But, after all, this too is meant to be our 'temporary' home. Trustees, priests, members and friends are wrestling with whether our goal should be to build a new church on our vacant lot, or look for another location, or an existing structure which would best suit our needs.

In the meantime, we have a home. It is all ours - transformed by the hard work and good will of an entire community, that living heart and spirit resonates throughout. We warmly invite you to visit.

Fran Whiting
Chicago

HEIMDALL ON THE SPANISH RIVER: THE CURE (conclusion)

Learning how to shoot rapids comes gradually, in part, of course, because one has to master the strokes and learn to read how a river moves. But there is something else. After days of paddling, one begins, as it were, to take into oneself the river itself, truly "getting into the flow." After awhile, one just knows how to move. But there is always more to take in, to know, as evidenced by scrapes, bumps, waves spilling over the bow, and near-misses in situations always a bit different.

Mosquitoes were ever-present, but on the whole, manageable. Except once. Rain soaked, cold, hungry, and worried that we were not going to find a campsite, we lit upon a sandbar that looked promising. There was a broad and open expanse of sandy beach looking out over a quiet marsh. Perfect! We unloaded the canoes and quickly spread out our wet gear on piles of dry logs and branches swept downstream during high water and stranded on the beach. Someone remarked that the scene looked like a plane wreck, as our gear was strewn over every square inch of the beach. There was a breeze, and happy that there were no mosquitoes, we made a campfire and began dinner as the sun went down. Sitting around the fire in peaceful contentment, suddenly there came a few of them. And then, within 30 seconds, we were be-

sieged. It was like the famous scene out of *The African Queen* with Bogart and Hepburn. Meals unfinished, we dropped our plates and ran for our tents. Unzipping the doors and crawling in took too long. In those few seconds the insides of the tents were ferociously abuzzzzz. Mad swatting left spots of red all over the inside walls. To top it off, my tent had a broken door zipper! In an act of panicked gallantry, my tent-mate, Michael, donned his headnet and went outside to cover the tent with a plastic tarp. Inside, we sweltered through the night listening to the swarming hum outside. Or was it inside? Were we going mad? At dawn there was a fearful hesitation to go out and greet the day. Thankfully, they were gone, but Michael, traumatized, still walked around in his headnet! We faced a glorious morning mist enshrouding the entire area, with the sun-disc glimmering through.

In the report on the Noganosh trip I spoke about the creativity involved in setting up a latrine. Since setting up and closing a latrine is not exactly a chore that is eagerly volunteered for, this year I announced a contest. At the trip's end we would judge the best creation. The criteria were: comfort of the seat (a bonus for a moss-lined log), geometry of the trench, privacy, the view (that scored big!), ease of finding, the design of the toilet-paper holder, and the system for indicating "occupied." All volunteered eagerly and the creations were wonderful...better than home! The one that would have won finally didn't because of one factor. It was dangerous! The designer had used a two-tier system. To get to the sitting log, one had to first step up onto another log which then served as a foot rest. The whole set up was some 6 feet in the air, and one had to hold onto a rope in order to avoid falling backwards! But the view onto the surrounding moss covered cliffs was beautiful. It was simply a case of overly enthusiastic designing.

We had an eerie experience at a place called Eagle Rock, an Ojibway sacred site. Eagle Rock is a huge cliff, and we stopped to have lunch among the talus boulders at its base. At our feet were scores of dried, molted exoskeletons of dragonflies and other insects. Above our heads were circling and screaming red-tailed hawks. Poison-ivy was everywhere.

Some felt that perhaps we should eat quickly and “split.” Then, Karen Snyder, while meandering and exploring the rocks, came across a pile of bones, human bones. They were obviously placed there in some kind of ritual fashion. A shoulder blade, rib, and knob of a lower leg bone were laying in a bowl fashioned out of the top of the skull. The skeleton from top to bottom was represented. The bones were carefully returned to where they were found, we got into our canoes, and paddled off under the screams of the hawks.

Karen had offered to single-handedly tackle the enormous job of organizing the food. The food was delicious, simple to make, beautifully organized through their packaging by Karen, and plentiful. One group, however, was loaded up with boys between 14 and 17. Under such conditions, there probably can never be enough food. Upon meeting this group on the river a number of times, we always heard: “There’s not enough food.” Eventually we gave them food from our group, seeing that we were well satisfied. Did that help?

The last night of the trip, our groups met again on Agnew Lake. It was getting late, we were having trouble finding a campsite, and were tired and hungry. We landed at the marina to inquire as to campsites. Now I must confess my own moment of weakness. The mounting irritability, also in me by now, led to the plea from those boys: “Can we order pizza?” PIZZA? In the wilderness?! Grouchy and resigned, I concurred. The bill? Oy! The whole scene left me sorely angry at myself. As we were paddling out to a campsite suggested by the marina, a dark cloud surrounded me. My son Philip, in the stern, saved the rest of the trip, by exhorting me to “let go of it” and enjoy what can still come. Every trip has a low moment, and for me, “pizza in the wilderness” was it! Never again.

As on the French River trip, the groups rendezvoused so that The Act of Consecration of Man and Service For Children could be celebrated in the wilderness. I managed to organize all that is needed so that it fit into a small waterproof pack. Stacked gear boxes served as the altar, and there was even a Plexiglas shield to protect from the wind the candles

sitting on specially selected river stones. Our chapel was a small “room” amidst a grove of pines.

You ask: “were you cured?” Yes indeed. But there’s one problem. The symptoms are already beginning to re-appear. I am worried about their extent come February. Perhaps we’ll have to make an appointment with the same doctor.

Peter Skaller
Toronto

THE KIMBERTON ST. JOHN’S CONFERENCE REPORT (conclusion)

There was a plenary session each day in late afternoon just before supper time. Occurring at about the hottest time of day in a corner of the gym where fans gave only an illusion of breathable air, this circle conversation offered a chance for participants to talk about any topic of interest. It was the only time during which participants had the opportunity to communicate with each other in the context of the whole group. Monitors helped to keep discussions on track and to shepherd a fair flow of conversation as hands were raised. Translators combined efforts to give a faithful representation of the more difficult nuances of colloquial speech.

Varying opinions later circulated about the relative success of this activity because somehow the conversations seemed unfinished. Indeed, intellectual content was a difficult component. Those who attended the plenary sessions may remember the 30 hour delay between one morning lecture and the discussion it engendered. During the 30 hours in between there was another very wonderful lecture and another plenary session! Most important of all is the fact that people did come, people did listen and bring impressions, people did express themselves in one language or another. Once again in this conference content proved less a vehicle for intellectual exchange than one for carrying human beings into a real meeting with one another.

The South American visitors numbered only about 25 out of the 120 present, [see "On to Lima

1999! in this newsletter] but they participated so thoroughly in all events that the distribution seemed balanced. They were warm and wonderful guests who came with a real wish to meet the North Americans. Argentineans demonstrated an inclination to communicate even without the advantage of translation. The struggle to share ideas with few words and several gestures seemed far more natural and comfortable than the telling about it indicates. The Peruvians brought many things from home as a special cultural introduction. They displayed beautiful Peruvian crafts and offered them for sale to alleviate their huge travel costs. They gave out cards showing a picture of their altar painting. There was a photo album to look through, and a slide show of pictures of Lima and of The Christian Community there.

The cultural events after supper were generally presented by conference participants from both the North and the South. There were tales, skits, and music to be shared. Humor proved inter cultural, the only hesitation being the time it took to translate. It was during these presentations after a long, captivating day that the great nature of human beings was so very evident. Everyone was tired; everyone was hot. To offer delight at the end of the day, to don costumes, to simply talk, not to mention move around, was nothing short of heroic.

One quite remarkable artistic presentation deserves its own comment. Any art, for instance a musical composition or sculpture, needs the conduit of the human being in order to stand in the sense perceptible world. The Eurythmy performance offered by Gail Langstroth and company sculpted Spanish and English for all present. Gail's staccato hand and body movements expressed the liveliness of the Spanish language and the characteristic texture of Spanish music. Her performance varied, carrying the warmth of the softer consonants and pure vowels of Spanish, then changing to reflect the more stringent consonants and gliding vowels of English. Her buoyant, unforced, and vital artistry gave meaning to "visible language."

A Close of Day service, forming a frame with The Act of Consecration of Man to the day's events, helped to bring the attention back from the relatively

more physical focus to the more spiritual. And then to sleep.

The conference ended midday on Sunday. The final plenum gave us one last opportunity to share. By this time the question of why we were doing this had lost itself amidst the conference activity. Participants, at first quite aware of the cultural differences, had begun to perceive a sort of social lemniscate, symbolic of how the differences between the two American groups really complemented each other, really had something to give each other. One North American woman summed up her own thoughts about these differences by pointing out that the South speaks in poetry while we, the North, speak in prose. The world needs both. The most important perceptions of this conference are surely found in the connections established between the conference participants, between people in communities, between communities, and on to an enhanced understanding of The Christian Community as a whole world entity. As Yvonne Philpott put it, "The circle of our St. John's plenum will not disappear when participants leave. It just gets larger."

This segment (part 3) of the St. John's Conference report was prepared by Patricia Sankewitsch with the help of the Devon community.

INTER-AMERICAN YOUTH CONFERENCE IN LIMA, PERU

On January 12th, eleven young North Americans travelled to Lima to participate in the first ever North-South American Christian Community Youth conference. The congregations hosted us most generously. For the conference we joined 55 South Americans mostly from Lima, but Argentina, Brazil and Colombia were also represented. In addition, the Northerners explored for five days sacred sites of the Inca's in Anzao and Machu Picchu.

Due to space limitations this brief report of a major event will have to suffice. I am deeply grateful for the experience, aware that the 'Star of Grace' shone brightly above us during this memorable youth gathering in the south of the Americas

Gisela Wielki, *New York*

CONFIRMATIONS, 1996

April 13, Saturday	Great Barrington
April 14, Sunday	Boston, Los Angeles
April 20, Saturday	Santa Cruz
April 21, Sunday	Denver, Sacramento
April 28, Sunday	Chicago, Detroit
May 5, Sunday	Devon, Toronto
May 12, Sunday	New York

SUMMER CAMPS, BACKPACKING TRIPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SUMMER CAMP

at Camp Tamarack in the High Sierra of CALIFORNIA will again take place in the summer of 1996, from July 3rd through the 20th of July, Dale Robinson directing and Everett Moraine as resident priest. Brochures are available at The Christian Community centers, as well as directly from Dale Robinson, 1962 Asilomar Drive, Oakland, CA 94611, Phone (510) 339-2769. Many Waldorf Schools will have them available also.

THE HIGH SIERRA BACKPACKING TRIP will be from July 22-July 27, with Everett Moraine and Bettina Eipper. For information call Everett Moraine, (916) 368-6394, at the Sacramento Christian Community, 3506 Eisenhower Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826.

EAST COAST CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CAMP, August 8-24, 1996. For information call Rev. Gisela Wielki, 309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023, Phone (212) 362-7204.

(FOR OTHER CAMPS INQUIRE LOCALLY)

INTERNATIONAL PENTECOST YOUTH CONFERENCE, MAY 1996 IN BERLIN

'Battling with Polarities - Living Creatively', May 23-28, ages 16-30. Information: Rev. Erk Ludwig, 309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023, Phone (212) 877-3577 or Rev. Richard Dancy, 212 Old

Lancaster Road, Devon, PA 19333, Phone (610) 647-6869.

YOUTH CONFERENCE, EAST COAST, END OF AUGUST, 1996

Age 14 and upwards. Information: Rev. Erk Ludwig, 309 West 74th Street, New York, NY 10023, Phone (212) 877-3577.

YOUTH IN MOVEMENT, AN INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGE An 'International Youth Service' has been active for some time now, arising out of work originating in Witten, mid-Germany. There and in Stourbridge, Great Britain, young people, ages 18-30, meet regularly to pursue different social tasks, under the banner of 'Die Steinschleuder - Bewegung zur Bewegung', which has been rendered as 'The Slingshot - Movement to (the) Movement'. Projects organized are: Building camps in South-America and in Ukraine, and holiday camps for children from Chernobyl; Class trips and adventure weekends introducing ecological ideas; Youth camps and youth conferences. The work is financed through charitable means. For information contact Kevin Street, 103 Hagley Road, Stourbridge, DY8 1QY, Great Britain.

'ROUNDABOUT'

'Roundabout' carries Current topics, Reports and Information about initiatives created by young people in The Christian Community - 'coming to you three times a year'. This International Forum of The Christian Community Youth Movement in its Michaelmas 1955 issue, on 44 pages gave all this in four languages, predominantly in German and English, with some Russian (but I could not find French in this issue). A Christmas issue, intended to cover all youth section activities in 1966, such as conferences, weekends and camps, had not yet reached us in Denver at the time this North American Newsletter had to be completed.

If you are interested: ask your local priest, or write to Roundabout, Nauklerstrasse 62, 72074 Tuebingen, Germany; Phone and Fax: +49 7071-550945.

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA, AS OF FEBRUARY, 1996

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Due date for the next issue is August 20, 1996